

ALBRECHT DÜRER

The Life of the Virgin

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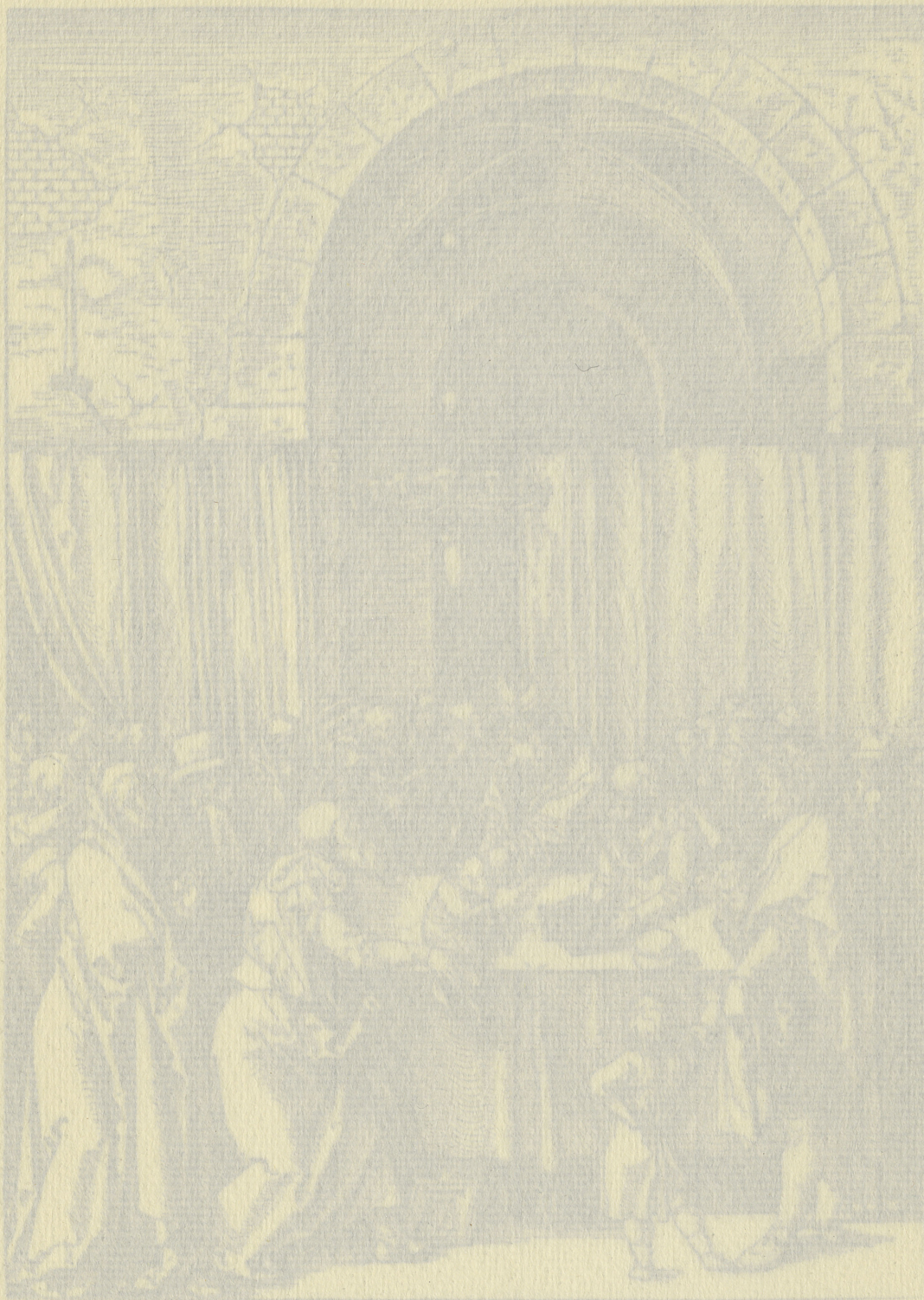
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PLATE III. An angel appears to Joachim while he tarries in the country and counsels him to meet his wife at the Golden Gate.



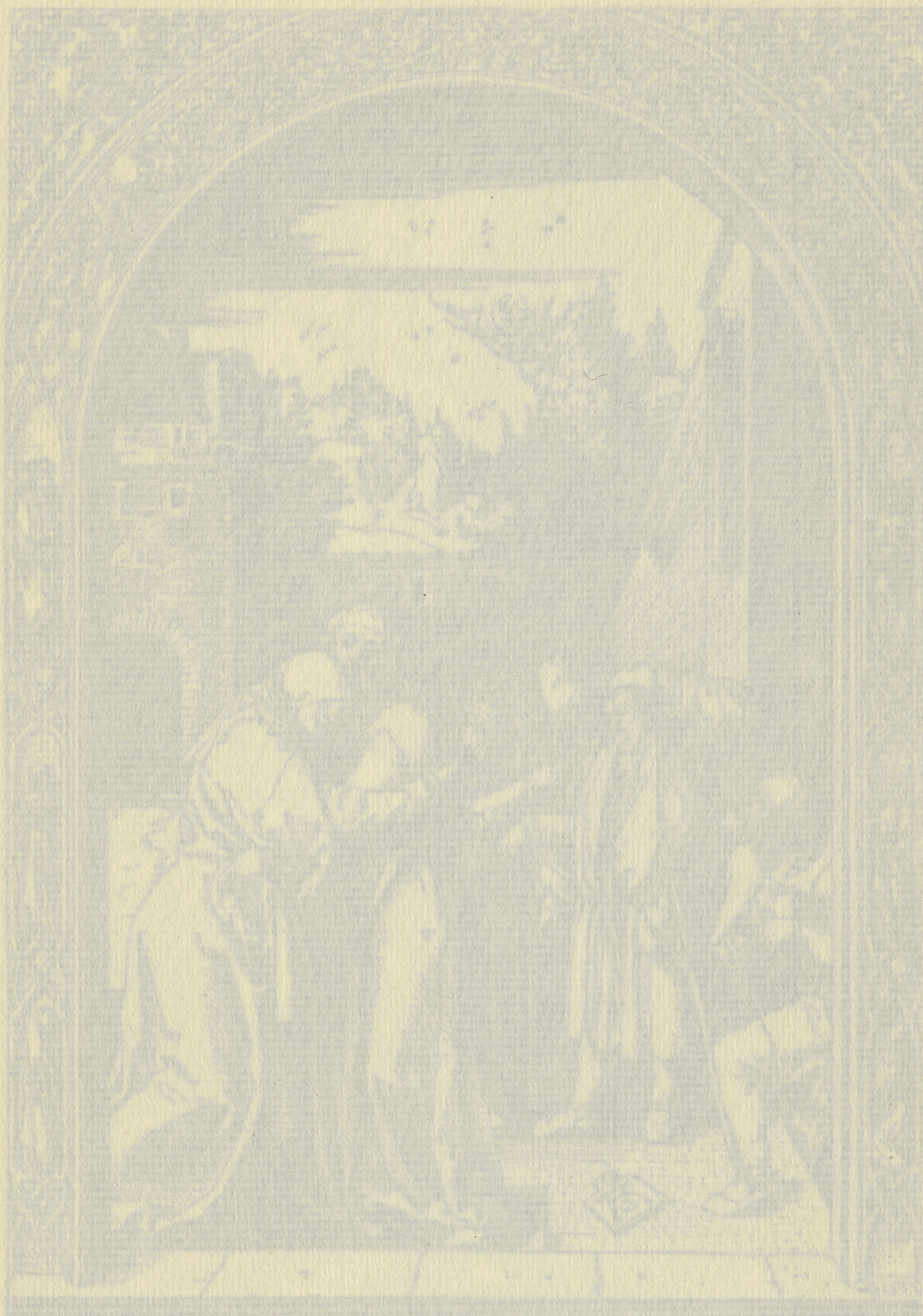
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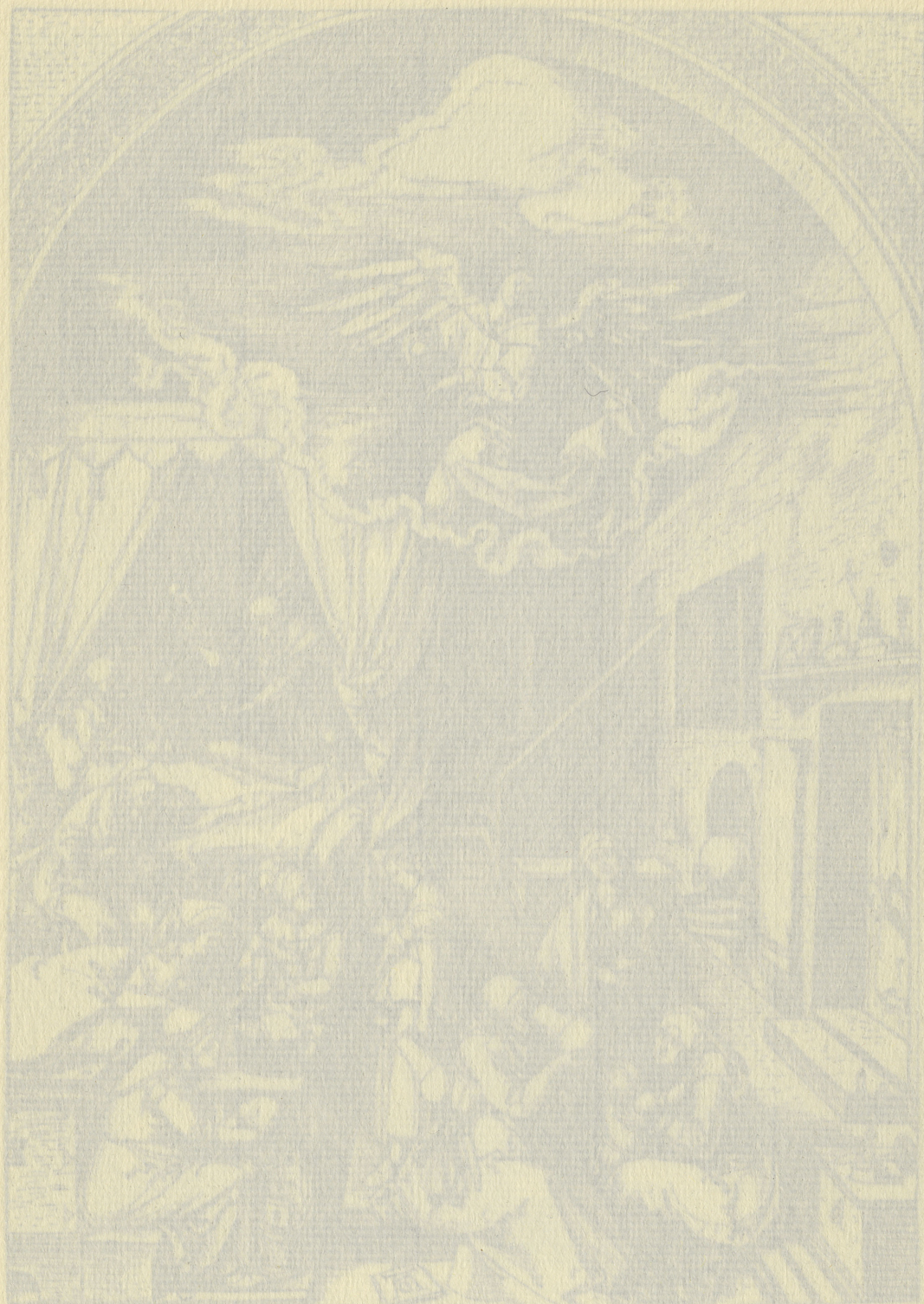
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PLATE V. The godlike Mary is born to Joachim and Anna, who had been childless for so long.



THE SCENE OF THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN MARY, BY GIOVANNI CARLO CARLONI, 1780.

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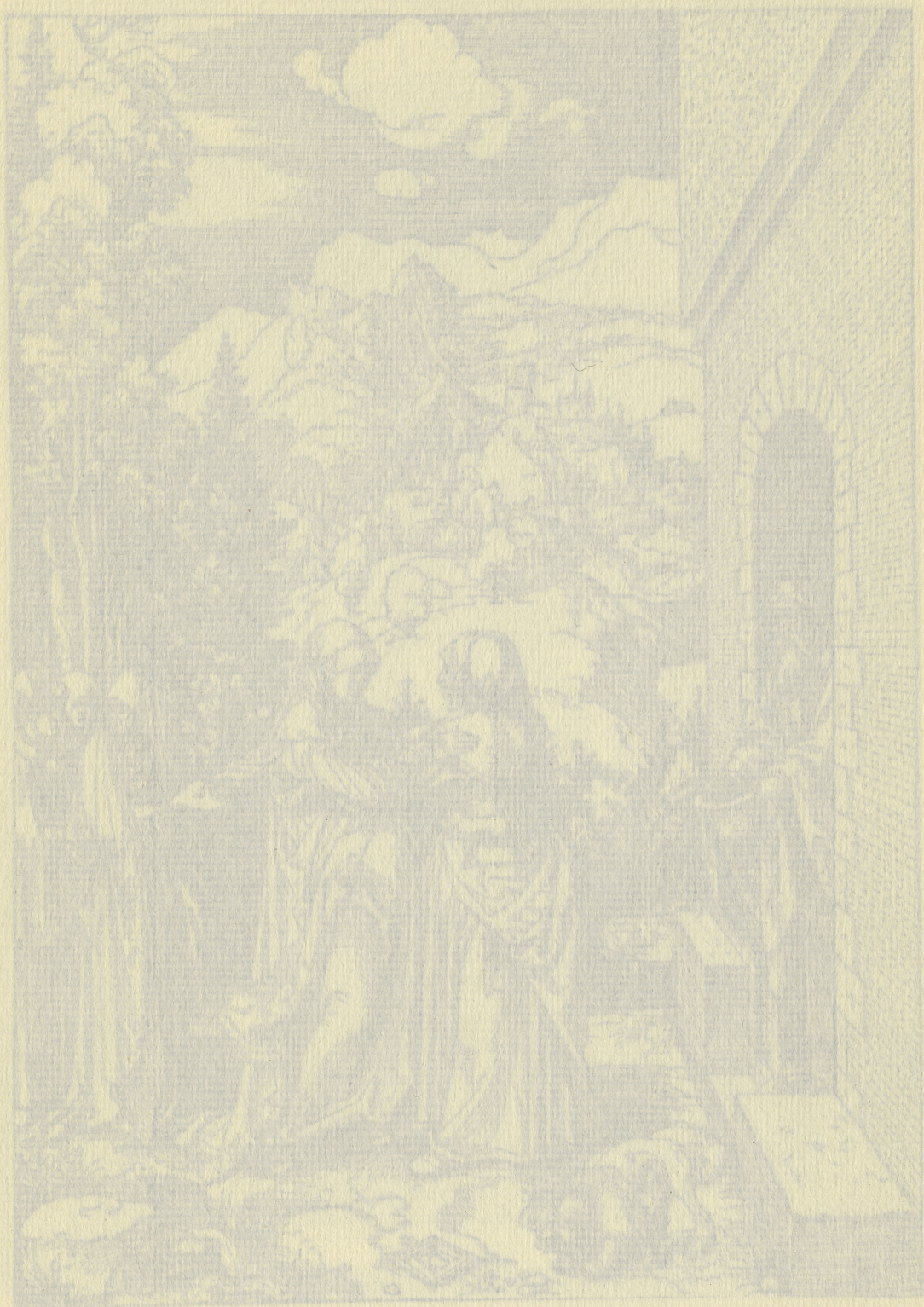
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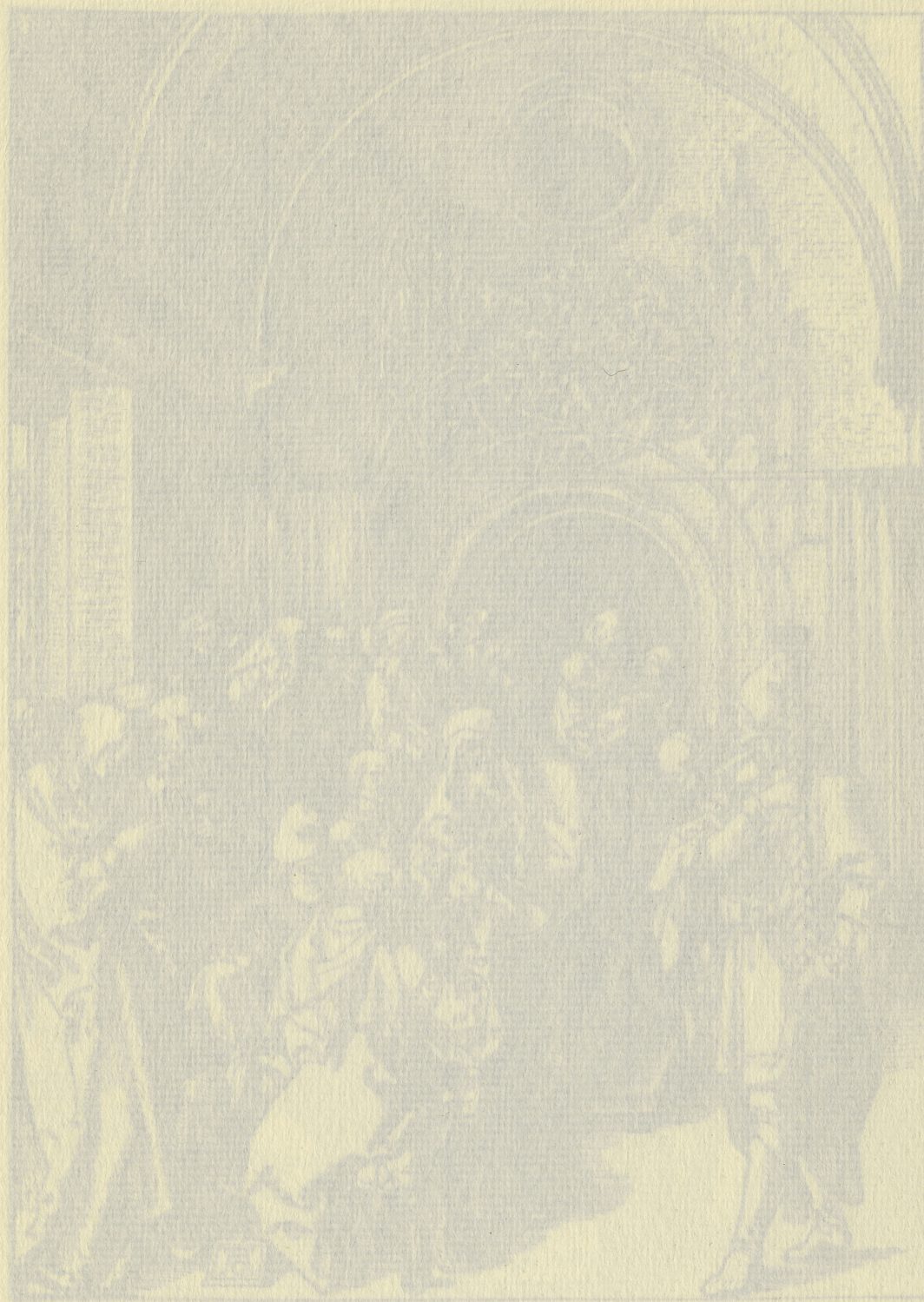


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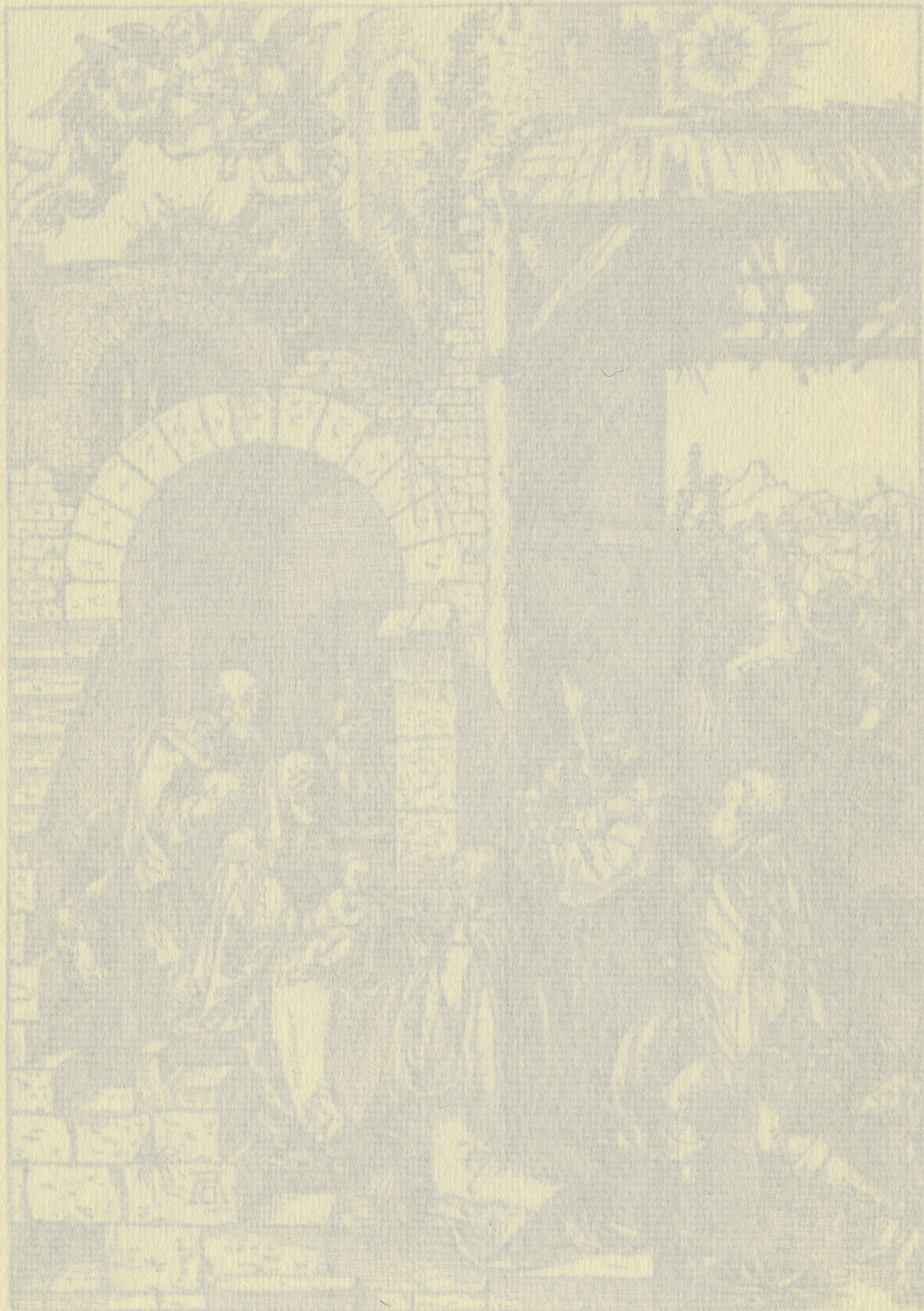


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and the other side of the road, the road to the right is the road to the right



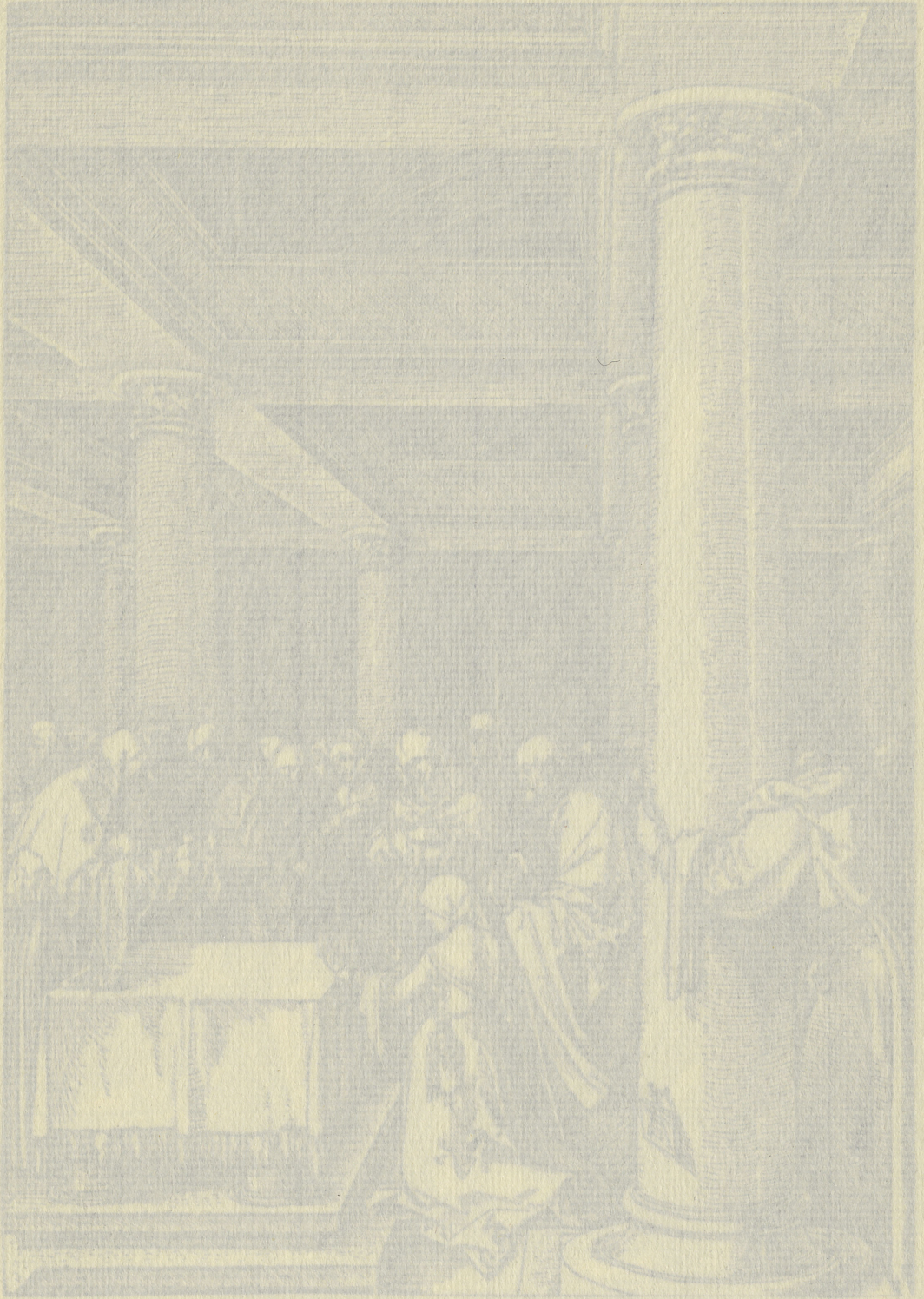
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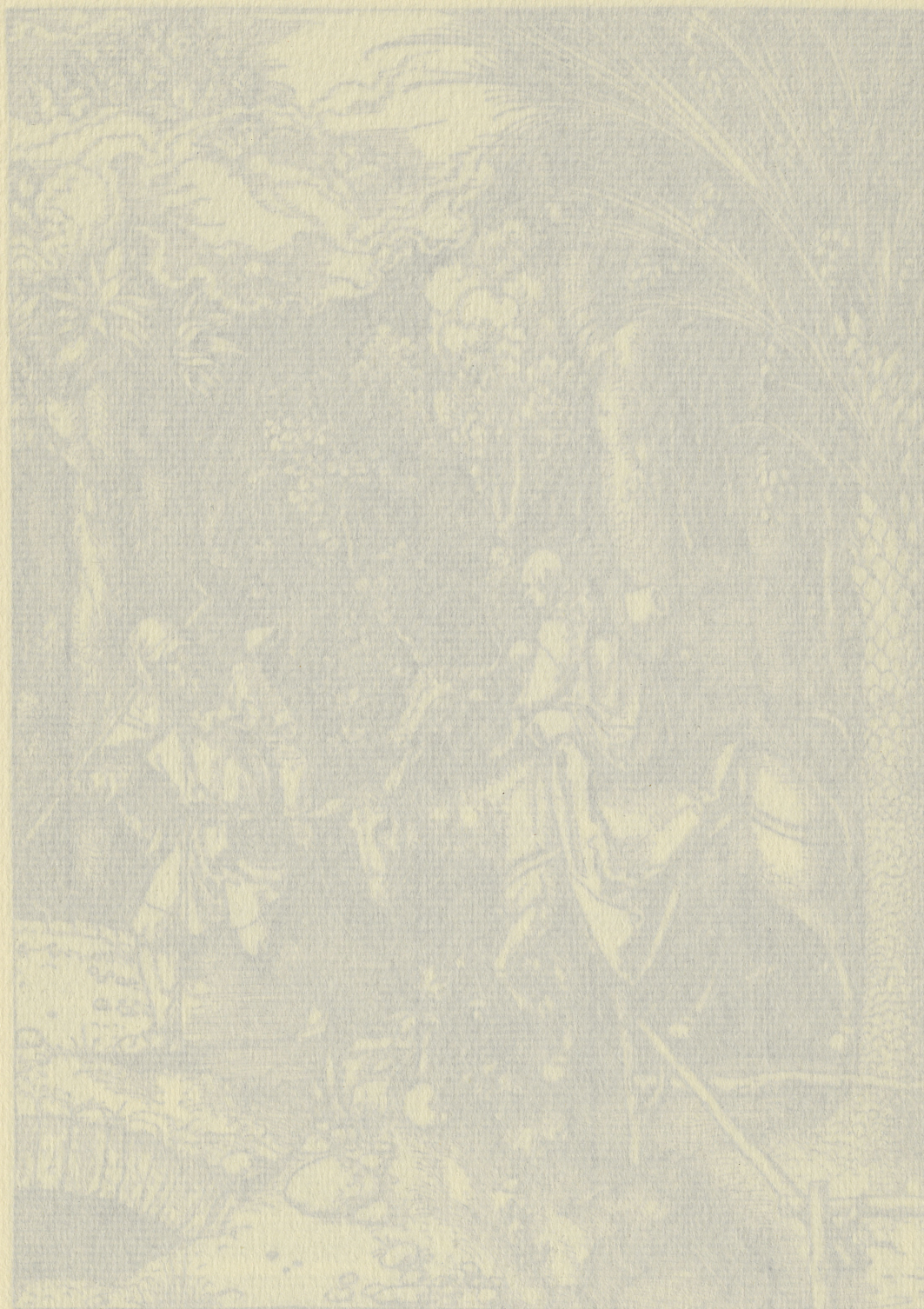
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RESTORATION OF THE OLD FISH MARKET IN THE CITY OF LONDON



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PLATE XVI. Mary discovers the boy Jesus among the Doctors of Scripture in the temple at Jerusalem.



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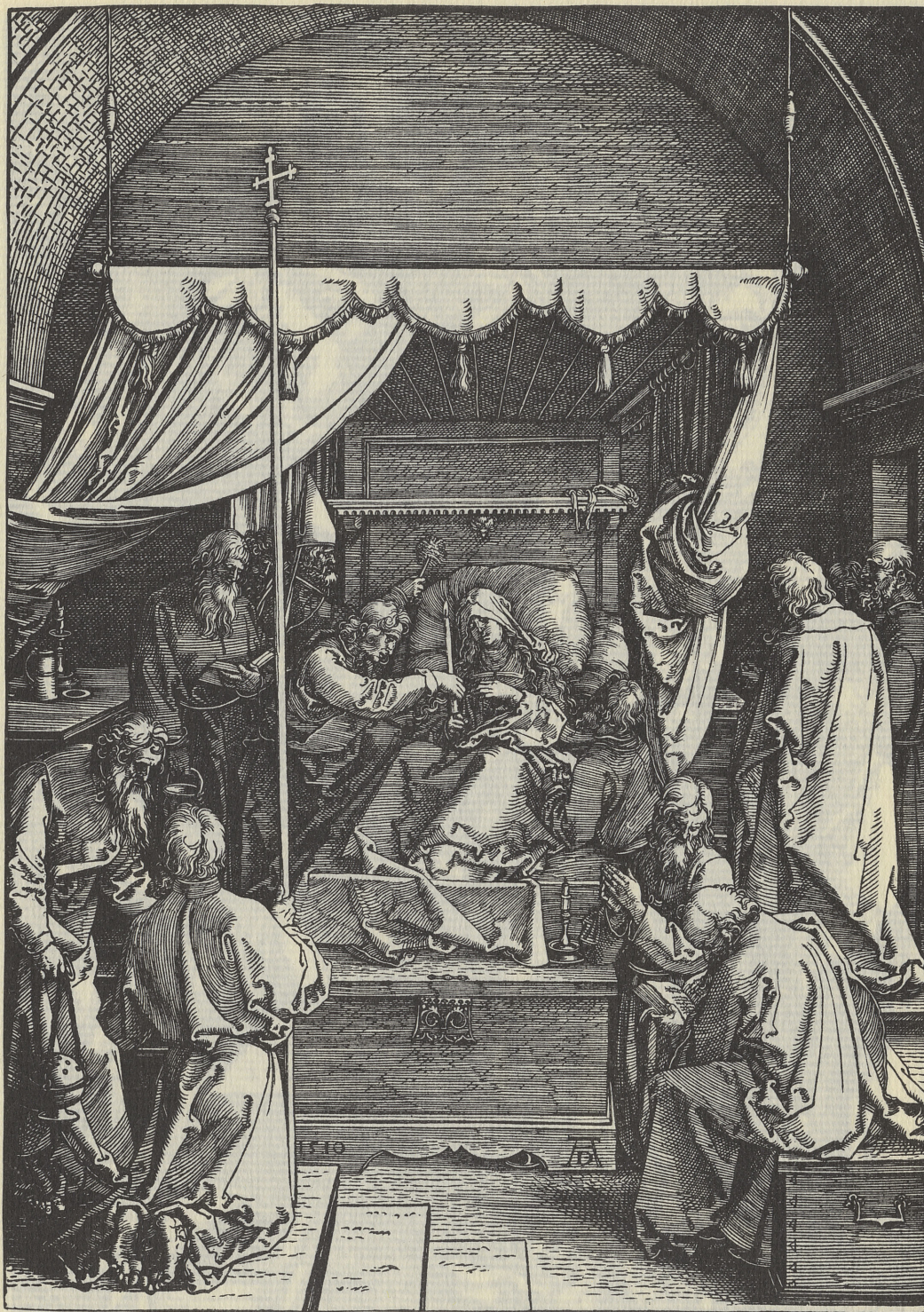
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PLATE XVIII. Fifteen years after Christ's ascension Mary dies with all the saints and her Son Himself at her side.



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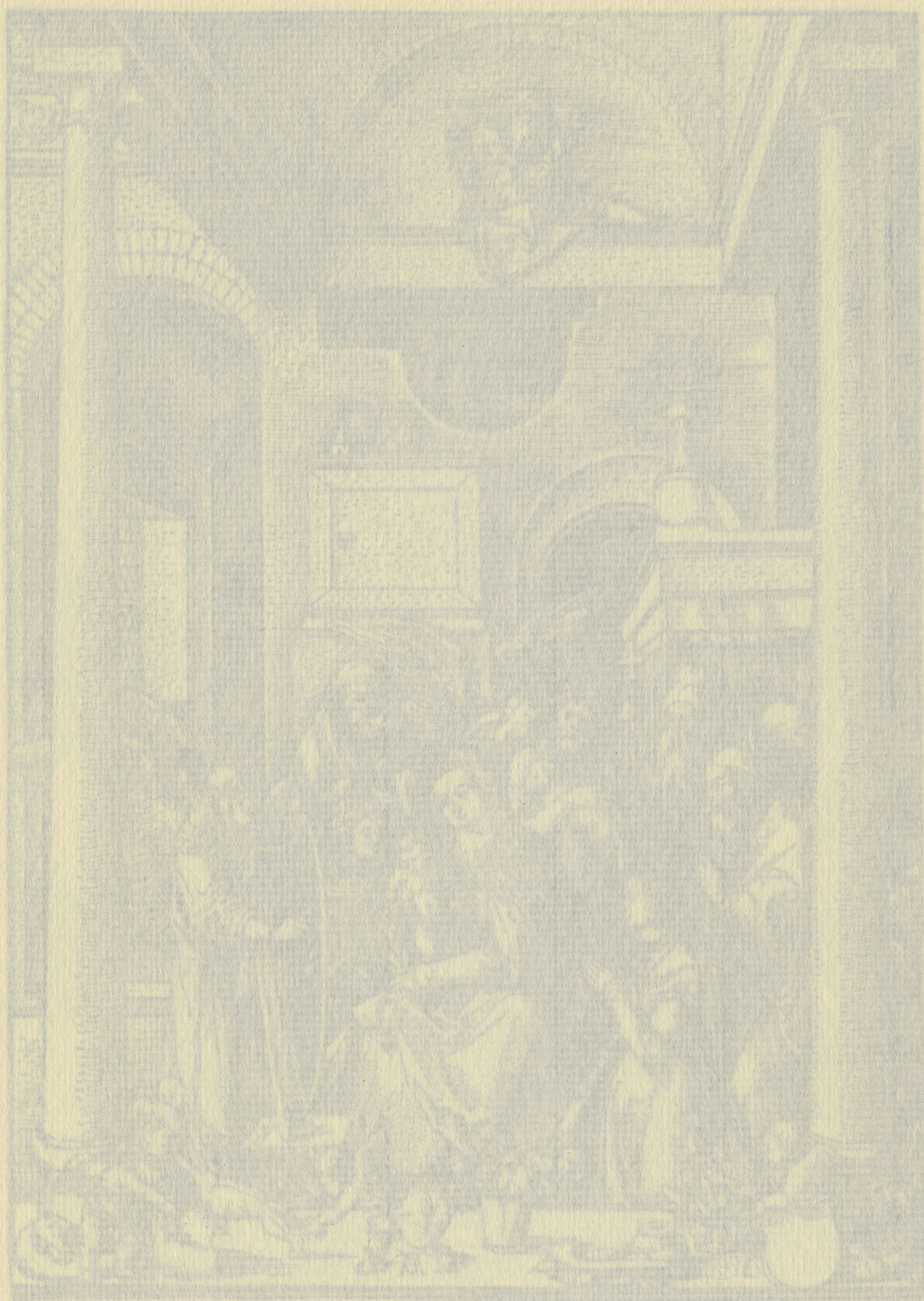
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THE CHILDONI

THE CHILDONI is a new and original design in the field of modern furniture. It is a masterpiece of design and craftsmanship, and it is the only piece of furniture of its kind. It is a masterpiece of design and craftsmanship, and it is the only piece of furniture of its kind.

THE CHILDONI is a new and original design in the field of modern furniture. It is a masterpiece of design and craftsmanship, and it is the only piece of furniture of its kind. It is a masterpiece of design and craftsmanship, and it is the only piece of furniture of its kind.

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EPITOME IN DIVAE PARTHENICES MARI
AE HISTORIAM AB ALBERTO DVRERO
NORICO PER FIGVRAS DIGES
TAM CVM VERSIBVS ANNE
XIS CHELIDONII

Above is a reproduction from the title page for The Life of the Virgin as originally published in 1511. In translation it reads: A concise history of the life of the godlike Virgin Mary in woodcuts by Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg with verse commentary by Chelidonius.

ALBRECHT DÜRER, 1471-1528, was one of the greatest of German artists and probably the greatest designer of woodcuts the world has ever known.

The Life of the Virgin is the culmination of his three most important series of woodcut illustrations, the earlier two being *The Apocalypse* and *The Large Passion*. Dürer himself called them *Die drei grossen Bücher*—the three great books. The earlier designs in *The Life of the Virgin* place Dürer's woodcuts far above anything ever done with the medium before, while the later designs show him as the master of the technique who has never been surpassed.

Among the possible sources for the story of the Virgin as Dürer shows it are the Four Gospels, legends in Apocryphal writings, and other books and manuscripts in existence at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Dürer was not the first artist to use the Virgin's life as the subject for a series. Many earlier works of art dealt with it, notably Giotto's frescoes in the Arena Chapel in Padua, which were painted some two hundred years earlier.

The series of twenty woodcuts, *The Life of the Virgin*, was designed and produced between 1500 and 1511 in Dürer's native Nuremberg. They mark a transition period in his style between Gothic and Renaissance. During this period he visited Italy for about a year and a half, was cordially received by Giovanni Bellini and others, and was much influenced by the Italian Renaissance. This is apparent in the simplification and monumentality of the later woodcuts in the series, especially Plates IV, XIII, XVIII, and XIX. It will be noted that Dürer did not do the designs in the chronological sequence of the story.

While Dürer was the sole designer of these woodcuts, it was the custom to turn over the actual cutting of the block to a professional *Formschneider*. Probably Dürer followed this practice, exercising close supervision over the process. According to certain authorities, however, he did some of the actual cutting himself.

The reproductions in this portfolio were made from a set of twenty brilliant artist's proofs, owned by The Cleveland Museum of Art and in the Dudley P. Allen Collection. Artist's proofs are impressions made with great

care before the woodcuts are used for printing the published edition. Proof impressions of woodcuts from *The Life of the Virgin* are uncommon, and a complete series of proofs of such quality is extremely rare.

In the published edition of 1511, each print had on its back an appropriate text, written in Latin by Chelidonium (Benedict Schwable), abbot of a monastery in Vienna. His headings, translated by Dr. R. J. Schork, have been used as captions.

**Impressum Nurnberge per Albertum Durer pictorem. Anno christiano Millefi
mo quingentesimo vndecimo.**

**Heus tu insidiator: ac alieni laboris: & ingenij: surreptor: ne manus temerarias
his nostris operibus inicias. caue: Scias enim a gloriosissimo Romano
rum imperatore. Maximiliano nobis concessum esse: ne quis
suppoliticijs formis: has imagines imprimere: seu
impressas per imperij limites vendere aude
at: q; si per contempnum: seu auaricie cri
men: seculi feceris: post bonoru cor
fiscationem: tibi maximum pe
riculu subeundum
esse certissime
scias.**

The colophon above appeared in the 1511 edition of The Life of the Virgin. In translation it reads: Printed in Nuremberg by the artist Albrecht Dürer in the year of our Lord 1511. On guard, sneak thief of another's toil, pirate of another's talent. Beware not to lay indiscreet hands on our works. Be warned that his Majesty the Roman Emperor Maximilian guarantees our rights. Dare not to publish these pictures with counterfeit plates; dare not to sell these woodcuts within Imperial territory. Should anyone, prompted by scorn for the law or lust for ill-gotten gain, commit such crimes, be warned that his property will be confiscated and that he will most assuredly fall under the most dread of penalties.

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